

ABSTRACT

A distributed streaming media server system including a plurality of streaming media servers that each store a selection of multimedia files. A master streaming media server is communicatively coupled to the plurality of streaming media servers and compiles mapping information regarding a location of each of the multimedia files that are stored on each of the plurality of streaming media servers. Also included in the system is at least one streaming media client that requests access to a multimedia file through the master streaming media server. The streaming media client receives setup information regarding the requested multimedia file such that the at least one streaming media client may directly access the multimedia file from one of the plurality of streaming media servers. Various aspects of the present invention may also be found in a method by which a distributed streaming media server system having a plurality of streaming media servers, a master streaming media server, and at least one streaming media client provides a media presentation to a user. The method, not necessarily in this order, includes receiving a user request for a media file at the at least one streaming media client; forwarding the user request to the master streaming media server; analyzing the user request with the master streaming media server to determine which of the plurality of streaming media servers is appropriate for sending the media file of the user request; establishing a streaming media connection between the at least one server media client and one of the plurality of streaming media servers; and initiating transmission of a media stream that includes the media file from the one of the plurality of streaming media servers to the at least one streaming media clients.